

109TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. RES. 272

Recognizing and honoring the life and achievements of Constance Baker Motley, a judge for the United States District Court, Southern District of New York.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

OCTOBER 7 (legislative day, OCTOBER 6), 2005

Mr. SCHUMER (for himself, Mr. SPECTER, Mrs. CLINTON, Mr. OBAMA, Mr. BAYH, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. PRYOR, Mr. BINGAMAN, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. DEWINE, Mr. HARKIN, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. CORZINE, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. HATCH, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. LAUTENBERG, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. COLEMAN, Mr. HAGEL, Mr. SALAZAR, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. REID, and Mr. KERRY) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to

RESOLUTION

Recognizing and honoring the life and achievements of Constance Baker Motley, a judge for the United States District Court, Southern District of New York.

Whereas Constance Baker Motley was born in 1921, in New Haven, Connecticut, the daughter of immigrants from the Caribbean island of Nevis;

Whereas in 1943, Constance Baker Motley graduated from New York University with a Bachelor of Arts degree in economics;

Whereas, upon receiving a law degree from Columbia University in 1946, Constance Baker Motley became a staff at-

torney at the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc., and fought tirelessly for 2 decades alongside Thurgood Marshall and other leading civil rights lawyers to dismantle segregation throughout the country;

Whereas Constance Baker Motley was the only female attorney on the legal team that won the landmark desegregation case, *Brown v. Board of Education*;

Whereas Constance Baker Motley argued 10 major civil rights cases before the Supreme Court, winning all but one, including the case brought on behalf of James Meredith challenging the University of Mississippi's refusal to admit him;

Whereas Constance Baker Motley's only loss before the United States Supreme Court was in *Swain v. Alabama*, a case in which the Court refused to proscribe race-based peremptory challenges in cases involving African-American defendants and which was later reversed in *Batson v. Kentucky* on grounds that had been largely asserted by Constance Baker Motley in the *Swain* case;

Whereas in 1964, Constance Baker Motley became the first African-American woman elected to the New York State Senate;

Whereas in 1965, Constance Baker Motley became the first African-American woman, and the first woman, to serve as president of the Borough of Manhattan;

Whereas Constance Baker Motley, in her capacity as an elected public official in New York, continued to fight for civil rights, dedicating herself to the revitalization of the inner city and improvement of urban public schools and housing;

Whereas in 1966, Constance Baker Motley was appointed by President Johnson as a United States District Court Judge for the Southern District of New York;

Whereas the appointment of Constance Baker Motley made her the first African-American woman, and only the fifth woman, appointed and confirmed for a Federal judgeship;

Whereas in 1982, Constance Baker Motley was elevated to Chief Judge of the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York, the largest Federal trial court in the United States;

Whereas Constance Baker Motley assumed senior status in 1986, and continued serving with distinction for the next 2 decades; and

Whereas Constance Baker Motley passed away on September 28, 2005, and is survived by her husband Joel Wilson Motley Jr., their son, Joel Motley III, her 3 grandchildren, her brother, Edmund Baker of Florida, and her sisters Edna Carnegie, Eunice Royster, and Marian Green, of New Haven, Connecticut: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) extends its heartfelt sympathy to the family
3 and friends of Constance Baker Motley on the occa-
4 sion of her passing; and

5 (2) commends Constance Baker Motley for—

6 (A) her 39-year tenure on the United
7 States District Court for the Southern District
8 of New York; and

1 (B) her lifelong commitment to the ad-
2 vancement of civil rights and social justice.

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